

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

ESSA Title I, Part A Section 1116

Involving families as partners in the education process is critical throughout a child's academic career. When families support learning, children are more successful in school and school success helps children become successful adults. The district must provide opportunities for families to actively participate in the planning, implementation and review of school and district Title I, Part A programs. The following material is meant to provide an overview of the authorizing statute and should be used in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Education (ED) [Non-Regulatory Guidance for Title I Parent Involvement](#).

According to A-3 of ED's 2004 guidance and [20 U.S.C. §7801\(31\)](#), the term "parent" includes a legal guardian or other person standing in *loco parentis* (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare).

Funding Parent and Family Engagement Activities

Any district with an allocation of more than \$500,000 must set aside 1% of its allocation to carry out the required parent and family engagement activities. At least 90% of the funds set aside for parent and family engagement activities must be distributed to the schools. Districts with an allocation of \$500,000 or less are still required to implement the parent and family engagement requirements in the statute but are not required to have a specified minimum expenditure. Parents must be involved in the decisions as to how the parent and family engagement funds are allocated for parent and family engagement activities.

ESSA Section 1116(a)(2)(D) states that funds reserved by the LEA must be used to carry out activities and strategies consistent with the district parent and family engagement policy. Funds must be used for at least one of the following:

- Supporting schools and nonprofit organizations in providing professional development for the LEA and school personnel regarding parent and family engagement strategies, which may be provided jointly to teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, and parents and family members.
- Supporting programs that reach parents and family members at home, in the community, and at school.
- Disseminating information on best practices focused on parent and family engagement, especially best practices for increasing the engagement of economically disadvantaged parents and family members.
- Collaborating, or providing subgrants to schools to enable such schools to collaborate, with community-based or other organizations or employers with a record of success in improving and increasing parent and family engagement.
- Engaging in any other activities and strategies that the LEA determines are appropriate and consistent with the district parent and family engagement policy.

Districts providing Title I services to private schools must reserve funds for parent and family engagement activities for parents of participating private school children. The funds must be proportionate to the 1% amount reserved for parent and family engagement in public schools.

Building Capacity for Engagement

ESSA 1116(e)(1-5) explains that to ensure effective engagement of parents as well support a partnership among the school, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, each district and school must:

- Assist parents in understanding state academic content standards, state academic achievement standards, state and local academic assessments, the requirements of the Title I, Part A program, and how to monitor their child's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children.
- Provide training and materials to help parents work with their children to improve their achievement, such as literacy and technology training.
- Train staff with the assistance of parents on how to reach out to, communicate and work with parents as partners in their children's education thereby building ties between the parents and the school.
- Implement and coordinate parent programs and activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in participating in the education of their children.
- Ensure that information about school activities and meetings are provided to parents in a format and language they can understand.
- Coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement programs with early childhood education programs, Head Start, the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, the Parents as Teachers Program, and public preschool to support parents in helping in their children's education.

ESSA 1116(e)(6-13) provides additional suggestions in building engagement, stating that the district may:

- Involve parents in the development of training for staff to improve the effectiveness of the training.
- Pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with local parent and family engagement activities. This may include providing transportation and childcare to enable parents to participate in school related meetings and trainings.
- Offer meetings at a variety of times and conduct in-home conferences with parents who are unable to attend such conferences at school.
- Adopt and implement model approaches to improve parent and family engagement and provide support for parent and family engagement as requested by parents.
- Establish a districtwide parent advisory council and involve community organizations and businesses in parent and family engagement activities.
- Train parents to help promote the involvement of other parents.
- Provide literacy training, if no other funds are available for training.

See [Appendix D](#) for a list of resources to improve parent and family engagement.

Recommendations to Develop Effective Parent and Family Engagement

- Recruit and encourage families to become partners in learning; actively engage parents in planning and learning and target school-parent programs to the needs of the community and families.
- Encourage parents to be more than volunteers; parents participate in planning, review, and evaluation of the program as well as school activities and organizations.
- Communicate with parents to maximize instructional time for students and foster a team effort.
- Follow a philosophy that school is a place where parents, as well as children, can learn and that entire families should use school facilities to meet their needs.
- Communicate information to parents through their native language.
- Provide examples of classroom events (e.g., videos, newsletters, open house, and display of student work) for parents in order to broaden their understanding of the program.
- Provide transportation and childcare services for parents to participate in school activities.

- Develop partnerships with local businesses and community groups to foster successful schools.

Parent and Family Engagement in Schoolwide Programs & Targeted Assistance Schools

All schools receiving Title I, Part A funds, both Schoolwide Programs (SWPs) and Targeted Assistance Programs (TASs), are required to include a parent and family engagement component in their plan. Section 1114(b)(1)(F) of ESSA state that the schools operating an SWP must provide strategies to increase parent and family engagement in accordance with ESSA Section 1116. Section 1115(c)(1)(G) of ESSA details the same requirement for schools operating a TAS program.

The characteristics and actions of an effective parent and family engagement program should be the same no matter what type of Title I, Part A program is in place. The difference between the two will depend on the specific parents receiving services. Title I, Part A parent and family engagement activities should be geared towards the parents of participating children. All students benefit from funds and services in an SWP, therefore all parents are the focus of the parent and family engagement efforts. In a TAS, only certain students receive Title I, Part A services, meaning that the parents of those students are the ones who should receive parent and family engagement services.

District Level Parent and Family Engagement Requirements

District Parent and Family Engagement Policy

Each LEA receiving Title I, Part A funds must develop a written parent and family engagement policy. The policy is developed jointly, agreed upon, and distributed to parents of participating children. The policy should be reviewed (and revised as needed) with parents of participating children at the district's annual Title I meeting. Documentation of the review and revisions should be on file in the district Title I coordinator's office.

A written district parent and family engagement policy must establish expectations for parent and family engagement and describe how the district will:

1. Involve parents in the joint development of the district improvement plan outlined in ESSA Section 1112 and the process of school review and improvement under ESSA Section 1116;
2. Provide the coordination, technical assistance and other support necessary to assist participating Title I schools in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement to improve student academic achievement and school performance;
3. Build the schools' and parents' capacity for more effective parent and family engagement described in ESSA Section 1116(e);
4. Coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies with strategies under other early childhood education programs such as Head Start, Parents as Teachers, and Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters;
5. Conduct an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy with parents. The evaluation should include the policy's ability to improve the academic quality of the schools, including identifying barriers to greater participation of parents, the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, and strategies to support successful school and family interactions. Parents should be invited to design strategies for more effective parent and family engagement. Particular attention should be given to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background;
6. Involve parents in the activities of schools receiving Title I, Part A funds.

See [Appendix E](#) for a district parent and family engagement policy checklist.

Parents' Right to Know and Testing Transparency

ESSA 1112(e)(1)(A) and [34 C.F.R. Part 200.61](#) (EDGAR) state that at the beginning of the school year, an LEA must notify the parents of each student attending a Title I school that the parents may request, and the LEA will provide the parents on request, information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers, including, at a minimum, the following:

- Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether the child is provided services by paraeducators and, if so, their qualifications.

This information should be provided to parents in the fall through a general medium such as a letter or included in a parent handbook. The letter can be included as part of the report card overview if such a document is already being sent by the district. A sample notification of the right to request teacher qualifications can be found in the [Title I, Part A Sample Documents](#) folder.

Testing Transparency

Each LEA receiving Title I, Part A funds is required by ESSA 1112(e)(2)(A)-(B) to notify the parents of each student attending any school receiving Title I, Part A funds that parents may request information regarding student participation in any assessments mandated by ESSA 1111(b)(2) and by the State or LEA. The LEA will provide the parents on request (and in a timely manner), the information regarding the assessments including a policy, including any state or district policies on student participation, where applicable.

Additionally, the LEA must make widely available through public means (including posting on the LEA website, and where feasible, the website of each school) for each grade served by the LEA, information on each assessment required by the State to comply with ESSA 1111, other assessments required by the State, and assessments required by the LEA, including (where such information is available and feasible to report):

- the subject matter assessed;
- the purpose for which the assessment is designed and used;
- the source of the requirement for the assessment; and
- where such information is available:
 - the amount of time students will spend taking the assessment, and
 - the schedule for the assessment; and
 - the time and format for disseminating results.

Any LEA operating a district website must publish the information regarding testing transparency on that website in a clear and easily accessible manner. ESSA 1112(e)(2)(C) states that LEAs not operating a website must determine how to make the information widely available (i.e., distribution of that information to the media, through public agencies, or directly to parents). The information may also be included in student handbooks, published on individual school websites, or letter form. A sample notice on testing transparency can be found in the [Title I, Part A Sample Documents](#) folder.

Annual Evaluation

The effectiveness of the district's parent and family engagement policy and parent and family engagement activities must be reviewed every year. The evaluation will determine whether:

- The academic quality of the district has improved.
- Parent participation has increased.
- Barriers exist that hinder greater participation by parents.

The evaluation may be conducted through a written survey, a telephone survey or in person. In addition to summarizing and documenting the evaluation findings, the district must document how the findings will be used to improve the parent and family engagement program. Sample parent surveys and evaluations can be found in the [Title I, Part A Sample Documents](#) folder.

School Level Requirements

School Parent and Family Engagement Policy

Each school receiving Title I, Part A funds must develop a written parent and family engagement policy. The policy is developed jointly, agreed upon, and distributed to parents of participating children. The policy should be reviewed (and revised as needed) by parents of participating children at the school's annual Title I meeting. Documentation of the review and revisions should be on file in the school as well as at the district Title I coordinator's office.

A school's written parent and family engagement policy must establish expectations for parent and family engagement and describe how the school will:

1. Hold a meeting, at a convenient time, for the families of participating children. All parents and family members of participating children should be invited and encouraged to attend. The purpose of the meeting is to inform families of their school's participation in the Title I, Part A program and explain the requirements associated with the program as well as the right of the families to be involved.
2. Offer a flexible number of meetings (such as before or after school and evenings), and consider providing transportation, child care, or home visits;
3. Involve parents in an organized, ongoing and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of the Title I, Part A program including the planning, review and improvement of the school parent and family engagement policy and the joint development of the SWP plan under ESSA Section 1114(b)(2). Families must be notified of the written policy in a format that is easy to understand and in a language the parents can understand. The policy shall be made available to the local community and updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.
4. Provide parents of participating children —
 - a. Timely information about Title I, Part A programs;
 - b. School performance reports; including a description and explanation of the school's curriculum, common core state standards, forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet;
 - c. Their student's assessment results;
 - d. Additional opportunities for parents to offer suggestions and participate in decisions relating to the education of their children; and
5. If the SWP plan is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the LEA.

See [Appendix F](#) for a school parent and family engagement policy checklist.

No two schools should have identical parent and family engagement policies as no two schools are identical. Although there may be similarities, the document should reflect the unique population of the individual school and the contributions made by the families of that school. Similarly the school policy should not be identical to the district policy.

School-Family Compacts

All schools receiving Title I, Part A funds must develop a school-family compact jointly with parents of participating children. The compact should outline how parents, school staff and students will share the responsibility for improved academic achievement as well as how the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve Kentucky's high standards. The compact must —

1. Describe the school's responsibility to provide high quality curriculum and instruction to participating children to meet Kentucky's academic achievement standards.
2. Describe how parents will be responsible for supporting their children's learning; this may include items such as volunteering in their child's classroom, participating in decisions relating to their child's education and positive use of extracurricular time.
3. Addresses the importance of establishing effective, ongoing, two-way communication between teachers and parents through, at a minimum —
 - a. Parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually to discuss the compact and how it relates to individual student progress and achievement;
 - b. Frequent progress reports to families on student academic progress;
 - c. Reasonable access to staff and opportunities to volunteer, observe and participate in classroom activities.

As is the case with parent and family engagement policies, no two schools should have identical school-family compacts. See [Appendix G](#) for a sample of a school-family compact checklist.

School-Family Compact Signatures

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) requires school-family compacts be signed by all involved parties (school representative, parent/guardian, and student) and kept on file at each school as documentation. Since stakeholders sign the compact itself and turn it in, a best practice is to make a copy of the compact readily available for reference such as in the school handbook or on the school webpage. The language in the Sample Compact Signature Form (located in the [Title I, Part A Sample Documents](#) folder) could be used to collect the necessary signatures and verify all parties have read and agreed to the school-family compact.

ESSA 1116(d)(2)(A) requires the school-family compact be discussed at least annually at parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools. The discussion should include how the compact relates to the individual child's achievement.

Parents' Right to Know

Participating Title I schools are required by ESSA 1112(e)(1)(B) and [34 C.F.R. Part 200.61](#) to provide each parent with the following:

- Information on the level of achievement of the parent's child in each of the State academic assessments required under [34 C.F.R. Part 200.2](#).
- Timely notice that the parent's child has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable State certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and

subject area in which the teacher has been assigned. A sample parent notification regarding certification and licensure status of teachers can be found in the [Title I, Part A Sample Documents](#) folder.

Annual Meeting

All Title I schools must convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, and invite parents of participating children. The meeting should inform parents of their school’s participation in Title I, Part A, explain the requirements of the parent and family engagement statute, and the parent’s right to be involved. Some best practices regarding the annual meeting are as follows:

- Offer a flexible number of meetings (before or after school and evenings).
- Provide transportation, child care, or home visits if necessary.
- Involve parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely manner, in the planning, review, and improvement of the Title I program including the planning, review, and improvement of the Parent and Family Engagement Policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan.
- Provide parents with timely information about the Title I program; a description and explanation of the curriculum, the forms of academic assessment including a definition of proficiency; opportunities for regular meetings, and to participate in decisions relating to the education of their children and the opportunity to respond to any suggestions.
- Provide an opportunity for parents to submit comments on the schoolwide program plan once the plan is made available to the district.

Family Engagement and Communications Timeline	
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update parent/guardian notification of parents’ right-to-know, as described in ESSA Section 1112(e) and 34 C.F.R. Part 200.61 (EDGAR) • TAS: Ensure Title I schools have targeted students, set up files, notified parents, and implemented targeted assistance services.
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design evaluations for district and school family engagement activities. • Ensure each Title I school has provided an informational meeting about the Title I program for families.
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure school–family compacts are distributed, signed by stakeholders, and returned to the school. • Ensure each Title I school has published a listing of the opportunities available for families to build their capacity to be actively involved in the children’s education.
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute report cards or report card overviews.
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update district parent and family engagement policy based on data (e.g., evaluations). • Review and update school parent and family engagement policy based on data (e.g., evaluations). • Review and update school–family compact.
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in family and community involvement. Maintain documentation of these activities (meeting agendas and notes, meeting notifications, sign-in sheets, etc.). • Review and update school parent and family engagement policy based on data (e.g., evaluations). • Review and update school–family compact.

Suggested Documentation

It is recommended that you save the following items in the event of a monitoring visit. This is not meant to be an all-inclusive list, but rather provide guidance in documenting parent and family engagement in Title I schools.

District Monitoring Checklist — Parent and Family Engagement Sample Documentation	
• LEA Parent and Family Engagement Policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Notice of parent meetings, agendas, minutes, sign-in sheets, records of parent comments to support dissemination procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Title I budget reflecting required set-aside, distribution procedures of funds to participating schools, and samples of expenditures to date.	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Meeting agendas, minutes, and sign-in sheets for parent advisory council.	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Parent and Family Engagement Policy and School-Family Compact. Keep draft versions to indicate how parents influence school policy. Signed copies of compacts must be maintained at each school.	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Sample school/class newsletters.	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Copies of parent surveys and summary of results.	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Fliers, sign-in sheets and summaries of Parent Nights.	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Annual evaluation of the parent and family engagement program. Document how the evaluation results will be used to improve the parent and family engagement program.	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Parents' right-to-know	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Documentation of translation services.	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Log of phone calls, conferences, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
• A record of families' disagreements with an LEA's Title I plan or a Title I SWP.	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Parent notices such as: details about assessments and student participation in assessments; details about innovative assessment systems if a local district is participating in one; or intention to use a locally-selected assessment with high school students.	<input type="checkbox"/>